

Enough philosophical views have been expressed tonight. I do not have any great expectations about what we might see in the next Parliament. I have been here long enough to know that every one is different. We can expect to see some changes. However, one thing I can guarantee is that, no matter what happens, 57 members will have a different idea about who is right about what democracy represents and about what good government represents.

In the four years that I have experienced working as the Deputy Premier it has been a pleasure working with the Premier. It has been a privilege to work as his lieutenant. To all my ministerial colleagues, particularly the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the National Party, I say I appreciate their contribution and their loyalty.

THE SPEAKER (Mr Clarko): The thickness in my voice is due to my cold. I blame my two year old granddaughter. If she did not go to day care, I probably would not have the problem. I am prepared to undertake that my speech will be slightly shorter than the one given by the Presiding Officer in another place today. After tonight, I will never again address this House. Never again will I stand in this Chamber and speak to all assembled members. That is rather momentous, at least for me, because I have been here 23 years, and that is a long time.

Since I gave my maiden speech - perhaps that is sexist - in 1974 I have spoken here many times. On some occasions those speeches were well prepared. However, once the speech was totally unprepared. The story is similar to others. I refer particularly to a speech given earlier tonight by my friend the opposition leader of House business. I am the first Speaker to use that term on a regular basis and I have tripped myself up most of the time. One day I was sitting on the opposition front bench in the seat of the member for Morley and I was busy preparing a speech on a Bill that was to come up later that day. I vaguely heard the Speaker, one of the select former Speakers of this House, say, "The question is that the Bill be now read a second time." There was a long pause. Only the Leader of the Opposition and I were sitting on the front bench. He told me to get up and speak. "What! What!" said I. He said, "Speak now; get the call." Mr Speaker, being considerate, started to put the question again because he knew there was some difficulty. I asked my leader what was the Bill. "I don't know", he said, "but get up and speak and I will get someone who should be here." So I did. I said, "Mr Speaker", very slowly, and I said, "I am pleased to be able to speak on this important matter today." I said that slowly too. Then I tried to send a message to my brain that I should think rapidly and come up with some brilliant comment, but as usual the brain was dead. So I tried another tack and said in my most statesmanlike way, "No legislation comes before this House that has not been thoroughly examined by a wide cross-section of the Administration and the bureaucracy." I continued on in that vain in a totally vacuous way. Eventually - it seemed like hours but it was only minutes - the person due to speak for the Opposition arrived in the Chamber, at which time I promptly sat down. I still do not know what that Bill was or what it was about and was rather offended when some of my colleagues told me that it was probably the best speech I ever made in this House.

I must give members a little chronicle of the posts I have fortunately held in my time here. I came here as I said in 1974 and I was a backbencher until 1975, when there were some dramatic changes in the party with which the Deputy Premier had a close association. As a result of that problem, I was Government Whip between 1975 until 1977. I then became the Deputy Speaker for five years from 1977 to 1982 and in 1982 and 1983 I was Minister for Education. I was very pleased to hold that position. I then became a shadow Minister - I was not pleased to hold that position - for the 10 years from 1983 to 1993. I was the only person in the shadow ministry to be a shadow Minister for the whole time. That indicates how much change occurred. I had many shadow portfolios. It is interesting to note how, when one becomes a shadow Minister, one becomes an expert on that subject. For a while, I was the shadow Minister for Prisons. I knew nothing about prisons, like all good men. However, it was a good portfolio for getting publicity because every time somebody broke out of gaol, the newspaper would get in touch with me and I would have my photograph in the paper with me saying, "It is a great pity that the Government is not more careful in looking after prisoners." After I vacated that position my successor said exactly the same thing.

I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee as it was called then and I was later its chairman. I found that experience very valuable. I was the opposition leader of House business for about two years. I have been privileged to be the Speaker since 1993. Anyone who examines those posts will note that I have been closely associated with the operations of this House in a wide variety of positions.

Mr Omodei: Shadow Minister for Local Government.

The SPEAKER: I was. The parliamentary process is dear to me. I have had the opportunity of seeing other Parliaments in operation and I cannot say that we have the best form of the Westminster system. However, adding to what was said earlier, the Deputy Speaker and others have put forward some excellent amendments and alterations to our procedures. There should be more. The long speeches of greater than an hour that are given by some people are a bit like those given in the Legislative Council when I first came here; members of that House could speak infinitely on any subject, and many tried to do that. So that I do not speak in a nougat way I will make a soft criticism of the operations of this House. I refer in particular to the quality of the speeches that are made in this House by all members, including me. If this Parliament is to grow in stature not only are changes in procedures required, but also,

as Mrs Malaprop would have said, the speeches must become better and better. I am not suggesting we do not have excellent speech makers in this House, because we do. However, all members could make their speeches better. On some nights I hear members say that the debate on a Bill is droning on and speeches are being made without a great deal of substance. As I am the oldest member in this Chamber, members can bear with me with that little bit of advice. It will not matter to me whether members' speeches get better or worse, because I will be in bed.

Mr C.J. Barnett: We may broadcast them.

The SPEAKER: In my time in this place the best orator was Hon William Leonard Grayden. On Wednesdays he would do the heavy work, defending the Government. One evening the motion before the House was on childhood education. I was part of the Liberal Party's education committee long before I came into this place. That committee did a lot of work on early childhood education and it recommended that the Government move into what we call today preprimary education. It was at a time when neither party was in support of such a change. The education officials repeatedly said that it would cost more money which would come out of the Education vote.

Returning to Hon William Grayden, as he and I walked down the corridor from the dining room the bells were ringing and he told me he had to speak on the Opposition's motion. He knew of my interest in that subject and he asked me for a couple of points. I told him it would be no trouble to give him some. At the time I was sitting where the member for Roe sits and Bill Grayden sat where the Minister for Labour Relations sits. When we sat down he asked me to suggest a point from which he could start. I did that and he asked me to jot down a couple of points and to pass them to him. He started with the point I suggested and I wrote down five dot points. At an early stage in his contribution one of the opposition members interjected on him and he turned on the member and gave one of his terrific retorts. There was a great uproar and I used that opportunity to pass him the five dot points. He said, "What's this? I don't want that." I said, "But you asked for it", and he replied, "I have more than enough information now."

I recommend to members that when they have the opportunity they read his speeches, particularly the one about the monkey's brain. It was a fantastic speech. I tried on one occasion to be a public speaker but failed. However, when Bill Grayden reached the point in his speech where he was cutting off the top of the head of the monkey before he dipped in the imaginary spoon to take out some of the brains and eat them, which was a practice in China, I looked at all the members in the House and every member had his eyes fixed on William Leonard Grayden. I suggest to members that they look it up and read it.

I also commend Sir Charles Court who was my leader for a long time, both before and after I came into Parliament. He was very organised, thorough and in control of every speech he made. An example of his thoroughness is that when I was government Whip Sir Charles Court would look around the Chamber to see whose seat was empty. The member who was sitting next to me at the time would notice what he was doing and would warn me that Sir Charles Court would soon be around to see me. Sir Charles Court would walk to where I was sitting and would ask where certain members were. I would say that I was not sure, but I had it written down and I would tell him where that member was. He would then ask where other members were and I would say that they had ducked out for a minute. His reply was that there was no place for that and that all members were supposed to be in the Chamber. He said a member's first duty was to his seat in this House. Times have changed, have they not? That is a bit of trivia, but overall Sir Charles Court was a consummate batsman. He would open the innings and he was like the two Waugh brothers together. We could always tell what would happen. I am sure the father of the House well remembers that if Sir Charles came back to this House in one of his old suits we knew we would be in the Chamber for a long time. He was even cautious in that way.

I refer briefly to Hon John Tonkin who was an amazing member of this House. I knew him outside this place in regard to Meath Care (Inc) where he spent 49 years on the committee. His knowledge of parliamentary matters was fantastic and he knew the standing orders inside out. Before he retired he used to sit in the seat which was occupied until recently by the member for Pilbara. Something would happen and he would take a point of order and, without opening the standing orders, he would say, "I think Standing Order 106 on page 78 says" - and he would summarise the standing order - and then he would open the standing orders and read the relevant one. Thank God, in the brief time I have been the Speaker, none of the members knew the standing orders!

Sir David Brand was in this place for a short time after I came here, but he was not the Premier at the time. I always regarded him as an outstanding member of Parliament. Many older members on the coalition side held Sir David in high regard.

I have made many good friends, both before I became, and during the time I have been, a member - among members on my right, my left and in the other place. I thank them all for their friendship, especially, the Deputy Premier and the former Speaker who came into this place at the same time I did in 1974.

I thank all the staff who have been helpful and friendly to me for so many years. Vic Moate is one of my favourites because I taught him at Perth Modern School. Members cannot blame me for any of his faults. Since I became the Speaker I have had outstanding support from the Clerk, Peter McHugh. Without his advice I would not have been able to do the job as I have. I thank him and I also thank the Deputy Clerk, Doug Carpenter. I also thank John Mandy, who got me into a lot of trouble over the lights. To start with I tried to blame somebody else, but I was the butt of so much criticism that I feel I should say it was my idea. I am sure that one day someone will give John and me credit for these lights.

Mrs Roberts: I heard it was John Mandy's fault.

The SPEAKER: No, that is not right. In 100 years' time this Chamber will be noted for these lights in a highly favourable way. As for someone who cannot pronounce the name of her electorate properly, I am not sure I should take her special advice.

Since I have been a member of Parliament one lady has been my electorate secretary and I refer to Bett Lyon. She is an amazing electorate secretary and person. If I were to return to Parliament, I would not have a male electorate secretary because a secretary like Bett is brilliant.

I have been an active member of the Liberal Party for nearly 40 years. It has been a very important part of my life. I began as an ordinary member and after I criticised the organisation of the branch I was told the job was not too hard and I should nominate for branch president. I did exactly that and I was successful. I later became the divisional president. I then went onto our state executive, which is a small body, unlike that of those on my left. I spent 28 years successively on the Liberal Party's state council. I can tell members that is a very long time to listen to politics at that level; one needs some resilience.

At the 1971 state election I stood against a sitting Labor member of Parliament, a bloke I regarded as a good fellow; the late Stanley Lapham. He held the seat for about three terms and was a good member of Parliament. Nineteen seventy-one was not a good year for a new Liberal candidate to stand for a seat in the metropolitan area, because that was when John Tonkin was elected with a big swing against the Liberal Party in the metropolitan area of about 12 per cent. In the year that John Tonkin won and Labor became the Government, I received a big swing, which I put down to the people who helped me organise my campaign, and to my time in local government. That successful loss - if it can be called that - encouraged me to stand again in 1974 when Sir Charles Court became the Premier.

I am proud that although about 12 Liberal lay members, as we would call them, opposed me for preselection as the Liberal candidate for Karrinyup in 1971, in all the preselections that followed I was fortunate never to have an opponent. I recommend that all members try that. It is quite helpful, and it also benefits one's health. I want to say deliberately that I am proud of my long membership of the Liberal Party, which I intend to continue to maintain.

My family and friends have been and still are a vital and integral part of my life. They have supported me strongly through all of what is at times a difficult job of being in politics. I thank my wife, Edith, my three beautiful daughters, and now their three not so beautiful husbands, my sons-in-law. I would not recommend anyone start a fight with any of them. Two of them are 6'6" and one is 6'3" and he has more fight in him than the other two together. I am very proud of them and my four sisters - I have no brothers. I have four grandchildren, one of whom will be about 11'6" and he will also help me in my declining years.

My campaign supporters have been of great assistance to me and without their help I would not have been able to succeed politically.

Before I came to Parliament in 1974 I spent from 1969 to 1975 as a councillor of the City of Stirling. That was an important period of my life. I believe that was a great apprenticeship for this place. Contrary to others saying that they thought I entered local government so I could come in here, that is not true. I have largely represented the same area with small alterations over the 30 years I have been in either local government or the State Parliament. Electors in North Beach, Trigg, Waterman, Sorrento, Hillarys, Gwelup, Karrinyup, Carine, Duncraig etc have given me tremendous support. For a long time now I have been privileged to have won every box in my electorate, and that is also a handy thing to manage.

As I have traditionally acknowledged the many dedicated people we employ in this Parliament and who make us able to do our job, I will do that again, although this is slightly repetitious. I thank Mr Vince Pacecca for his help throughout the year. He has done an excellent job and I found it enjoyable working with him. I also want to thank the staff of the Joint House Committee, the gardeners who keep our gardens and grounds so attractive, the cleaning staff, the security staff, the catering staff, and the people in the kitchen who, often, are not seen to need to be especially commended. The staff on the switchboard, as I have already mentioned, are out of sight; however, their efficiency and friendly service does not go unnoticed. The finance and personnel staff headed by Mr Ken Foster work tirelessly all year in their various duties, particularly in paying us, and I thank them sincerely for their efforts.

I thank Mr Neil Burrell and his reporting staff, who are a dedicated team who work very long hours to keep our records up to date, and do it accurately and with panache. I thank them for their help during this time. I thank Mr Bruce Bott, our relatively new Librarian, and his fellow librarians and assistants. I hope, Mr Premier, that when the new building is built that it has a new library and that library moves on and has the technology and support that is necessary for a Parliament. I thank those librarians for their service.

I do not think I particularly acknowledged my secretary in this place, Jan Graham, and Vince La Galia, who is an outstanding steward. Some members may not know that he once ran a brilliant restaurant. He is certainly over qualified for the job. I thank Sheila Mills and David Klemm of the Parliamentary Information Office for the work that they do. To the Deputy Speaker, whom I have already mentioned, and the six Deputy Chairmen I say a special thanks for their work in the Speaker's panel. It is a task that is not rewarded - other than for the Deputy Speaker - and it seems that they should be rewarded.

I turn the last page on my time in Parliament. I will never turn away from politics; I will always be closely interested in politics. I hope that all members will be kind to me when I return to this place and give me any necessary support as I proceed into my further dotage.

I was a lecturer in politics before I came to this place. One thing that does strike me is that it is amazing how little the community at large knows about politics. The media and people in the public make all sorts of statements about members of Parliament. They talk about our lack of quality, which I reject. I was a lecturer at the Nedlands College of Advanced Education in history and politics. If one looks at the list of positions and where people are ranked in the community, lecturers rank very highly. I was elected on the Saturday and on the Sunday morning when I woke up as a member of Parliament I knew I was down with the journalists and used car salesmen at the bottom of the list, and I had not done anything but have a sleep. It would be great if an education program could teach the people of our community more about the true role of politicians and the Parliament.

[Applause.]

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE - ORDINARY

MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the House) [1.49 am]: Mr Speaker, as I adjourn the House I thank you for your comments tonight. All members are united in their respect for you and for the other retiring members of this House. In my comments earlier I failed to acknowledge the contribution of a very important group of people. In those fleeting moments when I appear to now what I am doing as Leader of the House, that is due to Nick Hagley and Tania Mirco and the other members of the parliamentary services section. I particularly thank them. Behind the scenes they make sure that this Parliament operates in a sequence that allows us to proceed. It is with a sense of relief, pleasure, and of anticipation for the next few weeks that I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER: As I put the motion I will do what the Leader of the House has done; that is, catch up with the ones that went through. I thank the Leader of the House and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for their kind remarks. I also thank the Premier, Deputy Premier, the Ministers and all the members on both sides. Thank you very much.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.49 am (Thursday)
